THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU) : (a) to (c) Doubling of single line section/providing multiple lines on double line sections is taken up when their carrying capacity is saturated. The traffic on the suggested section has not yet reached the level to justify its doubling.

However, on Ahmedabad-Jamnagar-Porbander line, double broad gauge line already exists on Ahmedabad-Viramgam section and a survey for doubling of Viramgam-Surendranagar section has been sanctioned during 2006-07 to assess the traffic on this section.

Dilapidated Rail Bridges

542. SHRI SANTOSH BAGRODIA : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) the break-up of the old railway bridges, age-wise;

(b) how many of them have outlived their original life;

(c) whether it is a fact that Chief Commissioner Railway Safety has raised doubts over sustainability of ageing bridges in its report;

(d) whether Railway propose to abandon such bridges;

(e) if so, the details thereof;

(f) what steps are being taken to replace such bridges;

(g) if so, what would be the cost of building new bridges; and

(h) how is the Special Railway Safety Fund being utilized for renewing or strengthening the bridges?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU) : (a) There are approximately 1,27,000 Railway bridges on Indian Railways. The age-wise break up is as under:

(1) More than 100 years old - 51,340

(2) More than 80 years old - 75,600

(3) More than 60 years old - 90,387

(b) The life of Railway Bridges is not dependent on their age but is based on their physical condition as ascertained through various inspections and on operational lines the bridges are in serviceable condition.

(c) to (g) Chief Commissioner Railway Safety had raised some issues ragarding the health monitoring and strength assessment of old bridges, which have been suitably addressed and replied. Infact, Chief Commissioner Railway Safety has appreciated efforts made by Railways in finding suitable diagnostic techniques available World over for monitoring the health of various components of old bridges. The life of Railway bridges is not determined by age but on physical condition as asessed through inspections. Railway does not propose to abandon old railway bridges merely based on their age.

(h) The Special Railway Safety Fund was started in 2001-02. 1920 bridges out of proposed 2370 bridges have been rebuilt/repaired/ rehabilitated till 31.03.2006. Balance bridges will be completed by 31.03.2008.

Commission Vendors

543. SHRI TARINI KANTA ROY: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to refer to answer to Unstarred Question 2540 given in Rajya Sabha on the 17th March, 2006 and state:

(a) whether a commission vendor would be allowed to run his/her present occupation if he/she does not opt for absorption;

(b) whether it is a fact that so far and so long the cases of transfer of vendorship of the deceased commission vendors used to be transferred in the name of legal heir;and

(c) if so, what has prevented to follow the precedences?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU) : (a) No, Sir. In terms of Board's letter No. 2004/TG.III/639/2 dated: 1.12.2005 Commission vendors who do not opt for absorption even after maximum permissible two opportunities should be treated as "not interested" and should be debarred.

(b) and (c) In terms of Board's letter No. 92/TG.III/600/42 dated 10.03.1993, transfer of vendorship to legal heirs of deceased commission bearers/vendors is permissible on sympathetic grounds.